

MAR 23 2011

STATE ADMINISTRATION

March 23, 2011

Exhibit No.

10

Date

3-21-2011

Bill No.

HB 152

March 1, 2011

Senate State Administration Committee

Montana State Capitol

Helena, Mt. 59601

Re: Senate State Administration Committee hearing on HB152

Members of the Committee:

We, the undersigned coalition of voting, disability and civil rights organizations write to express our strong opposition to HB152 and urge you to vote "no" on this bill. Quite simply, they would enshrine anti-democratic, discriminatory and costly provisions into Montana State law. HB152 is a solution in search of a problem. Supporters of this bill argue it is needed to combat voter fraud. However, numerous investigations and studies have failed to provide evidence of substantial voter fraud that would be addressed by requiring government-issued photo identification at polling places. Instead, these bills will only erect barriers to the ballot box for thousands of Montanans.

Two national surveys have found that large numbers of American citizens do not possess a valid, government-issued photo ID, or the required documents to obtain a photo ID (e.g. birth certificate or passport). In addition, obtaining a Montana State ID card requires a personal visit to a motor vehicle registration site and payment of a fee of \$8.00.

This photo ID law would require voters to pay for the right to vote, or else for the State to pay for the required Montana ID card. It would not only potentially disenfranchise thousands of otherwise eligible voters, it could add several million dollars to Montana's budget. During a time when states across the country are facing massive budget shortfalls, now is not the time to enact a costly measure that seems designed to stifle the civic voice of citizens vulnerable to disenfranchisement.

Instead of focusing on costly measures that will do nothing but disenfranchise voters, we encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB152 and look at common sense, secure reforms that will increase civic participation across the state and ease the burden on election officials and voters alike.

Sincerely,

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

Advancement Project

Project Vote
People for the American Way
Fair Elections Legal Network
Demos
Disability Resource Association
Rock the Vote
League of Women Voters of the United States
American Association of People with Disabilities
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
Asian American Justice Center
United States Student Association
Missouri Alliance for Retired Americans
National Council of Jewish Women, Missouri State Public Affairs
National Council of La Raza
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
Black Youth Vote
CREDO Action
Common Cause
National Council of Jewish Women
ACLU Voting Rights Project
Verified Voting



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FAX TO FOLLOW **MAR 23 2011**

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TO: Name: SENATE State Administration Council Date: 3/23/2011
Company: State of MT - Legislature
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FROM: Name: GLADYS HARDIN
Company: LWU of MONTANA
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Number of Pages to Follow: 2

NOTES: _____

